

Control



Foreign Policy

## Iraq Sanctions Yield to Special Interests in Senate

Omnibus foreign policy legislation imposing sanctions against Iraq was buried under the weight of special interest concerns on Capitol Hill in the closing hours prior to adjournment.

Although both chambers of Congress had voted by overwhelming margins to sanction Iraq for its alleged use of chemical weapons, the actual legislation fell victim to delays and to demands by members for special deals.

The collapse of the Iraq measure killed several other foreign policy measures, most notably a tightening of U.S. arms sales laws in response to the Iran-contra affair.

The bill's death also sparked an unusually bitter feud between the House Foreign Affairs and Senate Foreign Relations committees, raising new questions about the political stature of those panels.

Foreign Relations, in particular, has had trouble for two years getting its legislation onto the floor, creating frustrations on both panels. Sources in both chambers said the fallout from this year's battling could jeopardize the relationship between the committees well into next year.

As often happens at the end of congressional sessions, Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., was at the center of action. While he supported the Iraq measure, Helms lodged other objections that prevented the bill from reaching the Senate floor Oct. 21.

Although the State Department opposed the Iraq sanctions, President Reagan, during an Oct. 21 political campaign trip with Helms to North Carolina, personally lobbied the senator on other issues related to the omnibus bill. Had Reagan been successful in swaying Helms, Congress might have passed both the omnibus bill and another measure authorizing U.S. contributions to United Nations peace-keeping forces. (*Story*, p. 3142)

Even so, a senior State Department official said that "we escaped rather well" from the last-minute legislative quagmire. J. Edward Fox, assistant secretary of state for legislative affairs, voiced disappointment at the failure of

the U.N. bill but said the State Department was pleased that Congress did not enact other measures — including items pushed by Helms.

### Crafting a Bill

In the closing days of the session, House and Senate leaders tried to put together an omnibus foreign policy bill including several items that had stalled in Congress for one reason or another.

The Iraq sanctions were to be the centerpiece of the omnibus bill. Start-



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—Rep. Dante B. Fascell, D-Fla.

ing early in September, the Senate voted three times and the House twice to impose sanctions against Iraq to protest its alleged use of chemical weapons against its Kurdish minority.

House and Senate members early in October worked out a compromise sanctions package that met some administration objections. Even so, Fox said Secretary of State George P. Shultz probably would have recommended that Reagan veto a sanctions bill as damaging to U.S. diplomatic efforts to persuade Iraq to forswear the use of chemical weapons.

The Senate also had attached the compromise sanctions package to the tax corrections bill (HR 4333). (*Iraq*

*background, Weekly Report* p. 2983)

On Oct. 20, House Foreign Affairs Committee leaders produced their omnibus foreign policy bill (HR 5550), including the Iraq sanctions. As passed by the House later that day by voice vote, the bill had provisions on nine issues other than Iraq, most of them technical matters.

The major non-Iraq item was a substantial tightening of restrictions on U.S. government or private arms sales to countries that support international terrorism. Every provision but one had been worked out beforehand between members of the Foreign Affairs and Foreign Relations committees. The exception was an amendment by William S. Broomfield, Mich., ranking Republican on Foreign Affairs, putting into law a ban on arms sales preferences for New Zealand because of its refusal to accept port calls by U.S. nuclear ships.

Once the House passed HR 5550, Foreign Affairs Chairman Dante B. Fascell, D-Fla., acceded to a demand by Dan Rostenkowski, D-Ill., chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, that the Iraq sanctions be removed from the tax bill. Rostenkowski had objected to all non-tax provisions added by the Senate.

### Delays in the Senate

HR 5550, the omnibus foreign policy bill, officially reached the Senate shortly after noon on Oct. 21. By then, senators had concluded that their own attempts to craft a similar measure had failed. The Senate effort collapsed, in large part, because Helms and other senators demanded action on items that the administration and House leaders refused to accept.

Helms, according to aides and other sources, was pressing for two provisions that had been blocked three weeks earlier during action on the fiscal 1989 foreign aid spending bill (HR 4637). One Helms provision would have curtailed legal immunity for foreign diplomats in the United States. Another would have delayed a deal under which China is to launch three U.S.-made satellites. (*Weekly Report* pp. 2731, 2540)

—By John Felton

## Hill Support for Guerrillas in Angola . . .

Congressional supporters of anti-government guerrillas in Angola sidetracked, and ultimately helped kill, legislation authorizing U.S. support for new peacekeeping efforts by the United Nations.

In the closing days of the session, Angola re-emerged as an issue on Capitol Hill, with backers of the anti-government UNITA rebels there worrying about the direction of U.S.-sponsored negotiations over southern Africa. Those members held up the U.N. bill to express their views. In the end, time ran out and the bill died.

President Reagan in late September asked Congress for authority to transfer up to \$150 million from Defense Department or foreign military-aid accounts for the U.S. share of U.N. peacekeeping costs.

Recent negotiations have made possible the resolution of several regional disputes: the Iran-Iraq War, a guerrilla war in the Western Sahara, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, a civil war in Angola and the South African occupation of neighboring Namibia. In each case, the United Nations may provide long-term peacekeeping forces. (*Background, Weekly Report p. 1831*)

Reagan's request moved quickly in the House, where Foreign Affairs gave its approval on Oct. 4. However, the panel for two weeks delayed sending the bill to the floor for various parliamentary and procedural reasons.

In the meantime, Capitol Hill leaders pressured the administration to toughen the U.S. stance in talks over the future of southern Africa. Those talks, stalemated after months of surprisingly fast progress, are aimed at getting Cuba to withdraw its 40,000-50,000 troops from Angola — where they are protecting a leftist government — in exchange for South Africa ending its occupation of Namibia.

In addition to sponsoring the talks, Washington is a direct participant in the region's conflicts. The United

States since 1986 has supplied military aid to UNITA, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola. By growing majorities, Congress has backed that supposedly covert CIA aid to the rebels.

Once the negotiations began showing promise last summer, conservatives expressed concern that State Department officials would settle for an agreement that failed to reflect UNITA's interests. Specifically, UNITA's backers demanded "national reconciliation" in Angola: free elections and direct talks between UNITA and the leftist ruling party in Luanda.

Their concerns were prompted, in part, by reports quoting State Department officials implying that Angola's internal politics might not be addressed directly in any agreement. Instead, officials have said, Angola's government would be forced to deal with UNITA once it lost the protective backing of the Cuban troops.

### Pressuring Reagan

At first, pressure on the administration was in the form of letters. Thirteen conservative House Republicans wrote Reagan on Oct. 12 asking for a "strong statement" that the United States would not accept a peace settlement unless the Angolan government agrees to "a simultaneous resolution of the internal political situation" there.

Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole, R-Kan., sent Reagan a similar letter on Oct. 17, three days after Sen. Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz., began circulating a letter warning that UNITA could fall victim to a "poorly negotiated agreement." DeConcini eventually collected signatures from 50 colleagues.

Turning up the pressure, pro-UNITA members also began linking the issue to the U.N. legislation.

In an Oct. 13 letter to Secretary of State George P.

With the House bill ready for Senate action, members of both chambers worked feverishly to get a deal in the final hours before adjournment. The main stumbling block was Helms' demand that Congress pass at least one of his amendments.

Helms was especially insistent, aides said, because an informal House-Senate conference was about to drop a version of his diplomatic immunity amendment from the anti-drug bill (HR 5210), then in the final stages of negotiation. House Majority Leader Thomas S. Foley, D-Wash., acting at Shultz' request, had led the opposition to the diplomatic-immunity amendment.

As the hours ticked away on Oct. 21, Reagan entered the picture to lobby Helms on several issues, including one of the most obscure provisions on the omnibus House bill. That provision would enable the United States Information Agency to continue beaming programs overseas as part of

its "Worldnet" television program. The agency's authority to provide the "Worldnet" service expired on Oct. 1, and the bill would have extended it for another year. "Worldnet" is a pet project of agency director Charles Z. Wick, one of Reagan's closest friends.

Reagan and Helms traveled to North Carolina together for a campaign event. The president's persuasive powers apparently failed to sway Helms, who, by long distance, continued to hold up HR 5550 until the House accepted his diplomatic-immunity amendment.

The House bill encountered other problems. At one point or another, eight senators placed holds on it. One was Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., who objected to the New Zealand provision. Another was Gordon J. Humphrey, R-N.H., who wanted to add a provision allowing the administration to spend unused foreign aid funds in Israel and other countries.

A Republican leadership aide, who asked not to be identified, said most of the other objections "dropped off one by one" until Helms remained as the major obstacle.

Helms did offer to modify his diplomatic immunity amendment to calm Shultz' objections. Under one proposal, the president could cite U.S. national security grounds to waive the new restrictions on diplomatic immunity.

But Shultz continued to oppose the Helms amendment, Foley stood fast in refusing to allow it, Helms blocked action on the omnibus foreign policy bill, and eventually time ran out. Shortly before Congress adjourned early on Oct. 22, the Senate referred HR 5550 to Foreign Relations, effectively killing it.

### Pell's Complaint

As the Senate took up the tax bill in the early hours of Oct. 22, Foreign Relations Chairman Claiborne Pell,

## ... Helps Kill Funds for U.N. Peacekeepers

Shultz, the leaders of the House Foreign Affairs Committee — Chairman Dante B. Fascell, D-Fla., and ranking Republican William S. Broomfield, Mich. — explicitly conditioned the U.N. money: "Any use of these authorized funds to support a process which does not include a total Cuban troop withdrawal and reconciliation leading to free and fair elections in Angola would, in our view, be directly contrary to the intent of this legislation."

The administration accepted that statement, but opponents of UNITA objected to putting such language into law.

The House passed the U.N. bill (HR 5551) on Oct. 20 by voice vote, with little debate. One opponent of aiding UNITA, Rep. Howard Wolpe, D-Mich., praised the State Department for putting the Angolan political issue on a "separate track" from the overall negotiations.

### Placing 'Holds' on the Legislation

When the U.N. bill reached the Senate, DeConcini and others began demanding more explicit assurances that the administration would not drop its support of UNITA. They did so by placing "holds" on the bill, a customary device by which any senator can block legislation by demanding that it not be brought up.

In addition to the Angola issue, senators questioned the bill on other accounts: Some worried about taking money from the Pentagon and foreign aid budgets; others were reluctant to approve money for forces to monitor agreements that have not yet been signed; and various committees got into a procedural dispute.

DeConcini got a quick response to his hold. Lt. Gen. Colin L. Powell Jr., Reagan's national security adviser, on Oct. 21 wrote DeConcini pledging that U.S. support for UNITA "has not been, and will not be, a bargaining chip in

the negotiations for Cuban troop withdrawal from Angola."

Powell asked DeConcini to allow a vote on the U.N. funding bill, promising in return that members of Congress would be consulted before any of the money was spent.

That letter satisfied DeConcini, who released his hold, an aide said. However, other senators kept their holds on the bill, among them Jesse Helms, R-N.C.

Congressional and administration sources later swapped blame for the death of the measure. Hill aides said the administration made a tactical mistake by waiting too long to request the money. "The administration tried to get this at the last minute by sneaking it through, and that raised the hackles of some people," said a Senate GOP leadership aide, who asked not to be identified.

Admitting the last-minute rush, State Department chief lobbyist J. Edward Fox said some members wanted to "make a statement" rather than pass legislation.

### Outlook for Negotiations in Doubt

Still unclear is whether the maneuvering in Congress will affect the negotiations over Angola and Namibia. The talks have stalled in recent weeks, primarily because of disagreements over a timetable for the Cuban withdrawal from Angola. No date has yet been set for the concluding round of talks, meaning that a Nov. 1 target date for an agreement set by all the parties probably will be missed.

In his letter to DeConcini, Powell warned that the Cuban pullout "will be delayed" if the United Nations does not have enough money for the planned 7,500-member peacekeeping force to monitor an Angola-Namibia agreement. However, two State Department officials said that warning was highly speculative, and members of Congress apparently gave it little credence.

—By John Felton

D-R.I., rose to bemoan the fate of the Iraq sanctions.

Normally one of the most reserved men in American national politics, Pell was visibly frustrated as he said that "I feel I have been a bit shortchanged..."

Pell recited the history of the Iraq legislation, noting that the Senate had taken the lead on Sept. 9, with a bill imposing a wide range of export and import sanctions on Iraq. Then, he said, "special interests got into the act" and the House passed a milder bill lacking provisions that had drawn objections from farmers, the oil industry and others.

Referring to the dropping of the sanctions from the tax bill, Pell said: "Now we are in a situation where a parliamentary maneuver in the House of Representatives has aborted the Iraq sanctions legislation altogether." House members did that, Pell said, "in hopes of forcing the Senate to act

on a package [HR 5550] that was objectionable to some senators..."

Pell complained that the "wishes of one or two members of the House in senior positions [are] violating the will of the Congress." He named no one, but an aide later said he was referring to Fascell and Rostenkowski.

The committee aide put the senator's complaint in stronger terms, saying that Fascell had tried to "blackmail" the Senate.

Fascell, in an interview, heatedly disputed Pell's statement and insisted that the Senate, not the House, was responsible for killing the sanctions. Fascell said the House had sent the Senate a "clean" bill — HR 5550 — with provisions approved by members of both chambers. And a senior aide to Fascell said the House had revised several provisions of HR 5550 at the request of Helms and other senators.

"I can't understand the insistence on putting the Iraq sanctions on the

tax bill, when there was a bill before the Senate which incorporated the agreement" on Iraq and other issues, Fascell said. "Helms didn't get what he wanted, so he killed the bill. What am I supposed to do about that?"

A spokesman for Helms, Foreign Relations minority staff director Jim Lucier, said other senators helped block the bill. Among them, he said, were "five or six Democrats" who opposed the New Zealand provision.

Fascell disputed that contention, noting that the Senate could have passed HR 5550 without the New Zealand provision and returned it to the House. The Senate erred, he said, in trying to force the House to accept non-germane amendments — diplomatic immunity and Iraq sanctions — on measures such as the drug and tax bills.

"This is a horrible way to legislate," Fascell said. "But somebody must like it because we keep doing it."